Numb. 124

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

——*Ex humili ſumma ad Faſtigia Rerum*
Extollit, quoties voluit Fortuna jocari. Juv.

From *Saturday January* 21. to *Tueſday January* 24. 1709.

From my own Apartment, January 23.

I WENT on *Saturday* laſt to make a Viſit in the City; and as I paſſed through *Cheapſide*, I ſaw Crowds of People turning down towards the *Bank*, and ſtruggling who ſhould firſt get their Money into the new-erected Lottery. It gave me a great Notion of the Credit of our preſent Government and Adminiſtration, to find People preſs as eagerly to pay Money, as they would to receive it; and at the ſame Time a due Reſpect for that Body of Men who have found out ſo pleaſing an Expedient for carrying on the Common Cauſe, that they have turned a Tax into a Diverſion. The Chearfulneſs of Spirit, and the Hopes of Succeſs, which this Project has occaſioned in this great City, lightens the Burden of the War, and puts me in Mind of ſome Games which they ſay were invented by wiſe Men who were Lovers of their Country, to make their Fellow-Citizens undergo the Tediouſneſs and Fatigues of a long Siege. I think there is a Kind of Homage due to Fortune, (if I may call it ſo) and that I ſhould be wanting to my ſelf if I did not lay in my Pretences to her Favour, and pay my Compliments to her by Recommending a Ticket to her Diſpoſal. For this Reaſon, upon my Return to my Lodgings, I ſold off a Couple of Globes and a Teleſcope, which, with the Cash I had by me, raiſed the Sum that was requiſite for that Purpoſe. I find by my Calculations, that it is but an Hundred and Fifty Thouſand to One againſt my being worth a Thouſand Pounds *per Annum* for Thirty two Years; and if any Plumb in the City will lay me an Hundred and Fifty Thouſand Pounds to Twenty Shillings (which is an even Bett, that I am not this fortunate Man, I will take the Wager, and ſhall look upon him as a Man of ſingular Courage and Fair-dealing, having given Orders to Mr. *Morphew* to ſubſcribe ſuch a Policy in my Behalf, if any Perſon accepts of the Offer. I muſt confeſs, I have had ſuch private Intimations from the Twinkling of a certain Star in ſome of my Aſtronomical Obſervations, that I ſhould be unwilling to take Fifty Pounds a Year for my Chance, unleſs it were to oblige a particular Friend. My chief Buſineſs at preſent is, to prepare my Mind for this Change of Fortune: For as *Seneca*, who was a greater Moraliſt, and a much richer Man than I ſhall be with this Addition to my preſent Income, ſays, *Maneres iſta Formæ, &c. Inſidiæ ſunt. What we look upon as Gifts and Preſents of Fortune, are Traps and Snares which ſhe lays for the Unwary.* I am arming my ſelf againſt her Favours with all my Philoſophy; and that I may not loſe my ſelf in ſuch a Redundance of unneceſſary and ſuperfluous Wealth, I have determined to ſettle an Annual Penſion out of it upon a Family of *Palatines*, and by that means give theſe unhappy Strangers a Taſt of *Britiſh* Property. At the ſame Time, as I have an excellent Servant Maid, whoſe Diligence in attending me has increaſed in Proportion to my Infirmities, I ſhall ſettle upon her the Revenue ariſing out of the Ten Pounds, and amounting to Fourteen Shillings *per Annum*, with which ſhe may retire into *Wales*, where ſhe was born a Gentlewoman, and paſs the remaining Part of her Days in a Condition ſuitable to her Birth and Quality. It was impoſſible for me to make an Inſpection into my own Fortune on this Occaſion, without ſeeing at the ſame Time the Fate of others who are embarked in the ſame Adventure. And indeed it was a great Pleaſure to me to obſerve, That the War, which generally impoveriſhes thoſe who furniſh out the Expence of it, will by this means give Eſtates to ſome, without making others the poorer for it. I have lately ſeen ſeveral in Liveries, who will give as good of their own very ſuddenly; and took a particular Satisfaction in the Sight of a young Country Wench, whom I this Morning paſſed by as ſhe was whirling her Mop, with her Petticoats tucked up very agreeably, who, if there is any Truth in my Art, is within Ten Months of being the handſomeſt great Fortune in Town. I muſt confeſs, I was ſo ſtruck with the Foreſight of what ſhe is to be, that I treated her accordingly, and ſaid to her, Pray, young Lady, permit me to paſs by. I would for this Reaſon adviſe all Maſters and Miſtreſſes to carry it with great Moderation and Condeſcenſion towards their Servants till next *Michaelmas*, leſt the Superiority at that Time ſhould be inverted. I muſt likewiſe admoniſh all my Brethren and Fellow-Adventurers, to fill their Minds with proper Arguments for their Support and Conſolation in caſe of ill Succeſs. It ſo happens in this Particular, that tho' the Gainers will have Reaſon to rejoice, the Loſers will have no Reaſon to complain. I remember, the Day after the Thouſand Pound Prize was drawn in the Penny Lottery, I went to viſit a ſplenatick Acquaintance of mine, who was under much Dejection, and ſeemed to me to have ſuffered ſome great Diſappointment. Upon Enquiry, I found he had put Two-pence for himſelf and his Son into the Lottery, and that neither of them had drawn the Thouſand Pound. Hereupon this unlucky Perſon took Occaſion to enumerate the Misfortunes of his Life, and concluded with telling me, That he never was ſucceſsful in any of his Undertakings. I was forced to comfort him with the common Reflection upon ſuch Occaſions, That Men of the greateſt Merit are not always Men of the greateſt Succeſs, and that Perſons of his Character muſt not expect to be as happy as Fools. I ſhall proceed in the like Manner with

with my Rivals and Competitors for the Thousand Pounds a Year which we are now in Pursuit of; and that I may give general Content to the whole Body of Candidates, I shall allow all that draw Prizes to be fortunate, and all that miss them to be wise.

I must not here omit to acknowledge, that I have received several Letters upon this Subject, but find one common Error running through them all, which is, That the Writers of them believe their Fate in these Cases depends upon the Astrologer, and not upon the Stars, as in the following Letter from one, who, I fear, flatters himself with Hopes of Success, which are altogether groundless, since he does not seem to me so great a Fool as he takes himself to be.

SIR,

'COming to Town, and finding my Friend Mr. *Partridge* dead and buried, and you the 'only Conjurer in Repute, I am under a Necessity 'of applying my self to you for a Favour, which 'nevertheless I confess it would better become a 'Friend to ask, than one who is, as I am altogether, 'a Stranger to you; but Poverty, you know, is 'impudent; and as that gives me the Occasion, so 'that alone could give me the Confidence to be 'thus importunate.

'I am, Sir, very poor, and very desirous to be 'otherwise: I have got Ten Pounds, which I de-'sign to venture in the Lottery now on foot. What 'I desire of you is, that by your Art, you will 'choose such a Ticket for me as shall arise a Benefit 'sufficient to maintain me. I must beg Leave to 'inform you, That I am good for nothing, and 'must therefore insist upon a larger Lot than would 'satisfie those who are capable by their own Abili-'ties of adding something to what you should assign 'em; whereas I must expect an absolute, indepen-'dant Maintenance, because, as I said, I can do 'nothing. 'Tis possible, after this free Confession 'of mine, you may think I don't deserve to be rich; 'but I hope you'll likewise observe, I can ill afford 'to be poor. My own Opinion is, I am well qua-'lified for an Estate, and have a good Title to Luck 'in a Lottery; but I resign my self wholly to your 'Mercy, not without Hopes that you will consider, 'the less I deserve, the greater the Generosity in 'you. If you reject me, I have agreed with an 'Acquaintance of mine to bury me for my Ten 'Pounds. I once more recommend my self to your 'Favour, and bid you *Adieu*.

I cannot forbear publishing another Letter which I have received, because it redounds to my own Credit, as well as to that of a very honest Footman.

Mr. *Bickerstaff*, *Jan.* 23. 17$\frac{2}{3}$.

'I AM bound in Justice to acquaint you, That 'I put an Advertisement into your last Paper 'about a Watch which was lost, and was brought 'to me on the very Day your Paper came out by 'a Footman, who told me, That he would have 'brought it, if he had not read your Discourse of 'that Day against Avarice; but that since he had 'read it, he scorned to take a Reward for doing 'what in Justice he ought to do. I am,

SIR,

Your most humble Servant,

John Hamond.

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